Congo News Letter

JULY 1942

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HEARD AND SEEN IN THE JUNGLE

"When one sits, he is short; but let him stand!" God's Book just sitting on a stool or table isn't much, but let it's Truth stand up in our conversation and in our deeds, how tall, how challenging!

* * * *

"Our hearts overflow with dirt, wash Thou us; only You Jesus have the soap and towel to clean away the filth of our lives."

* * * *

"When you go to a doctor, you carry your ear" — let us give our ear to the reading and preaching of the Great Physician's word."

"A man was walking along a country road one day, and he met a crocodile who said, "Man, look, take me I pray you to the stream. My strength is failing and if I do not quickly get to the water I will surely die".

Man replied, "Crocodile, I'm sorry but I fear your friendliness in seeking my help is only in words of the mouth".

"Man, have you no heart? I beg of you to carry me to the stream."

Thereupon Man lifted Crocodile to his shoulders and carried him toward the stream. When they came in sight of the water, Man started to put his burden down, but Crocodile besought him, "Friend, I beg you, carry me just to the beach, I am indeed very faint". Reluctantly Man agreed and as his feet touched the beach, Crocodile jumped from the Man's shoulder, quickly seized Man in his mouth and carried him to the depths of the stream.

Satan has many ruses by the which he seeks our utter destruction. God has given us wisdom to know that a croc-

odile bears no goodwill to man. Let us not be beguiled by soft, pleading words from such a mouth."

* * * *

Monkono, wreathed in smiles was the first person to greet the visiting missionary in one village. Three years ago Dr. E. Dorothea Witt visited here, and camp equipment was still being carried from the canoe to the hut in which she was to stay when Peter the nurse accompanying her rushed into her presence saying, "Doctor, permit me to have a syringe and medecine quickly!" Securing the supplies Dr. Witt hastily departed with Peter to a hut near which lay a newly made coffin ready and waiting. Peter's diagnosis was correct, an injection of the proper drug was administered and the life of an elderly Christian woman was saved The unwanted coffin was ripped apart and the boards put to happier uses. Monkono is still one of the happiest and most active Christians in her town.

* * * *

Great joy and excitement. Five years ago a little son was born to a very young married couple. Two years later or there abouts the little mother was happy on the arrival of a little girl, but- her joy in a few minutes of time was turned into a storm of sobs and tears when the native midwife presented her with the twin sister. "No," she sobbed, "I do not refuse the extra baby, but I am little more than a child myself. How ever am I to care for two babies all at once?" And now on this first day of May 1942 the little mother gave birth to twins again, a girl and a boy and she was away off in the forest at a fishing camp bordering a creek.

The father of these babes was disciplined by the church because upon the arrival of the first set of twins he entered into all of the old heathen customs observed in connection with plural births — marking the bodies of all the family with red and white clay, dancing, drumming incessantly over a long period of time, fetish worship and so forth. But as the children grew, the father wearied of all the old ways and longed to be back in full fellowship with his Christian friends. He began to teach his wife and had the evan-

gelist instruct her as well and now for some months she has been an Inquirer faithfully striving to fulfill the conditions for baptism. And now suddenly caught unawares at the fishing camp where crude branch shelters serve as temporary dwellings, lo, another set of twins arrives! "Let it be known" said the surprised but pround father, "That we are going to pray to God and trust Him to care for these many children we have received from His hand; we are not going to revert again to heathen custom and ways which our forefathers in their ignorance and darkness of mind thought necessary. I long to come back into full fellowship with Christ and the church, and my wife is looking forward to being baptized. The white teacher is soon coming to our village. We shall see her and assure her of our decision."

Five days after the birth of the babes the missionary reached their village. News quickly spread to the forest shelter, and the little family left immediately by canoe and paddling down a creek reached the bay of the lake separating them from the home village. A strong wind was blowing and the lake was very rough. For hours they waited, and then as the lake calmed, the sky became black and forbidding with signs of a terrific storm. But in the calm before the rain the undaunted little group paddled across the bay and at 7:30 p. m, the mother of the twins stepped from the canoe and walked some distance to her hut home, relatives following with the naked bits of humanity. An hour later afer an evening service the white teacher went to the hut. Chips were thrown onto the campfire and in the brilliant fire-light she greeted the mother who sat on a nearby mat holding Mboyo the latest twin girl, and shyly smiling her greeting. The father was standing with Mpia, the brother. Soon we had shirts on the tiny mites, and bath-towels wrapped around them (There were no soft baby blankets left for the needs of this fifth week of travel). The parents were commended for their bold Christian stand, relatives admonished to help them to be true and prayers offered for God's blessing and help in this hut home full of babies, and babes in Christ.

MARGUERITE ELDREDGE

"SAY IT WITH FLOWERS"

Say it with flowers? Not in Congo. That is perhaps the very last way an African would think of saying it. When he sees orchids or lilycups his heart does not dance as Wordsworth's did with the daffodils. What missionary has not been asked; "Why do you plant flowers? You don't eat them."

Gift giving, or rather exchanging, is an old Congo custom which to us is sometimes amusing and sometimes inconvenient or annoying. A visitor in a village is usually presented with a gift from the village chief and often from other villagers as well and, except in the case of the more advanced and christian, with the expectation of receiving something more valuable in return. I recall the time an old chief presented us with a scrawny fowl and was not pleased with what was given him in return. He asked for my husband's coat. When told that he had only one with him which he was wearing this chilly morning he replied; "O that one will suit me nicely."

But the Congo people have their own ways of expressing friendship, sympathy, and gratitude and often deny themselves that they may give. A cock was sent to us recently from a poor man whom we brought to the station in the truck when we returned from an itinerary. He needed medical care and could pay for neither medecine nor food while here under treatment. When he returned to his village, poor and still weak, he sent us this fowl which he could ill afford to give, with a note of gratitude for the help we had given.

Recently while in the district, a poor man with swollen feet and other symptoms of disease, came to us to buy medecine. When told the price of the medecine he had received he handed back one kind, saying that if he took it he would have no money left for a gift to the Lord on the morrow, which was the Sabbath. Although our gift looked larger in the basket the next morning we knew that his one franc piece was far greater in the sight of the Lord. He had given not out of the abundance of the purse but of the heart.

A girl of seventeen had been staying with relatives near

the station for some weeks and attending sewing and Bible classes. Last week she came to tell me she was going back home to her village. She sat for some time on the rug at my feet visiting. When she finally rose to say good-by she took from under her shawl, where it had kept perfectly quiet, a young duck which she gave to me. Such gifts come from the heart and mean real friendship and often sacrifice.

The gift most often given in gratitude of friendship is eggs. "Say it with eggs" would seem the Congo counterpart of the American slogan "Say it with flowers," and does not at all signify what we usually say with eggs in our country. When coming up to Sona Bata on the little narrow-guage railroad for the first time we were met at different stations by friends of "Tata Mac" who came to welcome him back and to see his bride. We are accustomed to it now but I thought it strange that almost without exeption they brought a wedding-gift of eggs; the expression of their congratulations and good wishes.

After a visit to a nearby village to chat with the women about Christ's way of life they bid me goodby with a few eggs, maybe one, maybe three or four. I call at the hospital with a little porridge or orange-juice for a sick child and later an uncle brings me an egg or two to say that he appreciates the interest I showed in this little nephew. I cut out a dress of cheap silk for a woman. A few days later her little sister brings two eggs saying simply, "Sister sent them to you."

Comparing gifts given in the Homeland and in Congo; One of my Congo birthday cards this year read; "I am sending you today an elephant's foot with Best Wishes for many happy returns of your Birthday". I was delighted. I shall make an umbrella stand of it if I am successful in preserving it, and it is especially interesting because the giver himself shot the elephant. So while you good Friends "Say it with Flowers" we in Congo shall continue to be original for some time yet and say it with eggs and with elephant feet.

RUTH H. MACDIARMID

FROM GENEVA TO SONA BATA

(Dr. and Madame Bréchet, whilst waiting to enter Angola, are relieving our difficult staff condition by replacing Dr. and Mrs. Freas at Sona Bata hospital. Ed.-)

"The Lord is my shepherd—I will fear no evil", these words take in this time of war a more concrete meaning. How marvelous it is to realize that the old 23rd Psalm is today as always a luminous truth. To go to the mission field and to see the missionary work is to verify that the Shepherd who leads His flock gives it blessing and grace! It is He also who has brought us across land and sea as far as Congo. We arrived here after great difficulties and we look backward with thanksgiving and forward with faith.

My studies of tropical medicine at Antwerp in 1940 were interrupted by the German invasion in the course of which I was able to attend the wounded in a Belgian lazaret. The prospects of leaving for Africa seemed destroyed when in 1941 I was able to return to occupied Belgium, finish my studies and obtain the diploma of colonial doctor which permitted me to make the request for the entrance visa to Congo. But it was not until 10 months later and not without difficulties that this departure was realized. Although our aim was the Swiss Mission in Angola, where we felt called by God, we were not able to go there directly and were obliged to go for a time to Congo Belge.

These ten months of waiting in Switzerland were long but active. The transit visa for Spain and Portugal alone required four months of waiting, our innumerable attempts being preceded by the imposed purchase of a steamer ticket. The date of departure was set ahead from month to month and when we had all our papers in order, two days before the departure fixed, the Spanish frontiers, then the French, closed in consequence of the entrance of the United States into the war. Once more our departure was questionable but there as before the reality of the Divine Shepherd gave us inward peace and confidence: "I will fear no evil: for thou art with me".

This proved true. January 7th, 1942 we left our country and after an easy but very expensive trip through Free France

and Spain we arrived in five days at Lisbon. The stay of a month and a half in this city, necessary to obtain a place on the boat, was useful for our approaches to the Portuguese authorities. It was particularly happy for the contact which we have had with the Protestant churches of this city, very different as to denominations, but very united in the service of Christ and the love of His Word.

The sea voyage on a Portuguese boat was very peaceful and without event. March 13th we set foot with emotion on the land of Africa for the first time! This first contact with Africa took place on the Portuguese side of the mouth of the Congo. After so many repeated obstacles and waitings we were as in a dream, on seeing all the natives and the majestic nature of Africa. A little while later we found ourselves at Léopoldville, still without knowing what we were going to do. And then one more time we have experienced the direction of the Divine Shepherd who has led us to the "green pastures. . ." of Sona Bata!

We do not know our distant future but we know that our place is here now, and the sight of the marvellous missionary work inspires and gladdens us. Our first impression is the immensity of Africa, the immensity of the missionary field, and the immensity of work realized, also the grandeur of the opportunities and possibilities which present themselves to the Mission today. Who are we to participate in such a combat? But certain of the blessed presence of the Shepherd we set ourselves to the work with happiness, for it is His work.

ANNY AND RODOLPHE BRÉCHET

GUINEA PIGS

These are the two-legged variety and they are black all over! They also have curly, kinky hair and can talk instead of squeak. They are especially cultivated at Kikongo where conditions seem favourable to their growth.

They really lead a double life, for they are not always guinea pigs. As a matter of fact, six days of the week they

are darling little kiddies who come to the Nursery School while their mothers and daddies go to class in the station boarding school. But on Sunday, they are magically transformed into guinea pigs during the hour that big folk are in church and they go off to the Junior Church in the Nursery School play-ground. For they are the material upon which the women and girl students do their practice teaching of the Bible stories they have learned during the week.

Bible story-telling for children is quite a different matter from the method which is generally employed out here by the people who think that "preaching" is the only way a Bible story can be told, regardless of the age of the listener. As we constantly hope (and as yet seldom find) women and girls are the ones who should reach the hearts of the little ones. We work entirely toward that end in our women's and girls' department. Little by little, as the years pass and we continue to expect it of them, shyness drops away and a few actually make the attempt to teach. At first it was an absolute impossibility to get even one woman to untie her tongue before a small audience of little children. But at last we have arrived at the place where one of our former pupils is ready to take her place as teacher of Bible story-telling, and the women in her classes gradually learn to forget themselves and at least attempt to teach the children.

The school year ended last week, but preceding the fanfare of closing exercises and graduation, was the nightmare of examinations. For the women and girls most of the exams were individual and oral. Among them was Bible story-telling exam. Each woman and girl was assigned a story taught them during the year. The story was only part of what was taught; the appropriate hymn was taught them during singing class; memory work and hand work dramatization of the story were also taught.

For several mornings of the week before school closed, the little "guinea pigs" were called in and divided into groups. Then the women and girls taught the various groups, trying to use the methods which had been taught to them. By the time each group had been subjected to six stories the little guinea pigs began

to coach their teachers. One would say to me "she hasn't taught us a song yet"....another would say "she forget to teach us a memory verse" and still another "she forgot to have us build an ark of the covenant in our hand work". And I found that for the third day I needed reinforcements in the guinea pig ranks. So they were sent off to the hospital to bring reinforcements from among little boys and girls in treatment.

Perhaps during the school year, the women and girls, as yet too conscious of self to lose themselves in the story, thought that the methods shown them were lacking in dignity. But surely, after this week of exams, the little guinea pigs will have taught them more than we were able to get across. Truly hath it been said, "And a little child shall lead them".

V. L. SMITH

FREDRICKSONS' DIARIES

Early in 1902—Fred was out travelling in all directions during the year, with Steven Bangu to help him place teachers wherever chiefs were asking for, or accepting them. The outlook is very encouraging. Ta Miese, one of our teachers, felt the call to leave his wife and child and go out to preach to people who never had heard. He started on his journey, walking eight days and entered Kingombi village. The village chief did not give this stranger an invitation to stay in his village, but there was one man there who told Miesi that he could sleep in his house, and so made Miese settle down with his bundle containing his blanket, a mat, the New Testament, hymnbook and school material. He had his supper and, as was his custom, sang hymns by the campfire-light, prayed, read aloud some scripture and tried to talk with his new friend about the "good news" he had come to teach them.

Ta Miese started next day to cut material for building a house with two rooms, one for worship and school, and one for a bedroom. When the house was nearly finished, someone destroyed it, and the chief warned Miese's friend that if he did not tell the teacher to go home, he himself would be killed. These years, chiefs so far from State officers continue to

rule in their African way. The man who had sheltered Miese had to tell him not to sleep in his house any more. The chief hoped that Miese would now leave his village and go away, but Miese was not that kind, so he removed all his belongings and spread his mat outside his friend's house where he slept under the shelter of the roof. Again Miese went to the woods and brought material for the house, and every morning and night he had open-air worship and told the beautiful stories of Jesus' life and death. Naturally, the boys in the village were curious to hear Miese's strange stories, and some ventured to let him teach them to read and write their language and to sing hymns. It was all so new and wonderful. But the God of this world had blinded the minds of the unbelievers, that the light of the Gospel should not shine in their hearts, and so one night someone poured poison into Miese's drinking water, but God delivered him from death.

Now only the roof was left, and Miese cut new grass several feet long which is used for thatching. This grass was put away in neat large bundles in the back of the house and someone stole it all, during the night. But our evangelist had endured all through Christ who strengthened him, and the chief now was the first to turn unto the light he saw in Jesus: then a real awakening was witnessed in this village. Miese was molested no more, people came to listen to the wonderful word of life, new life, eternal life for people in Africa who had feared death for so many centuries. Miese has seen showers of blessing and he has explained the symbol of baptism to those who believe.

Fred received a letter from Miese asking him to come out and baptize those who were accepting the word of God. We felt that this was the work of the Holy Spirit, and hesitated to rush out too early, so Fred wrote to Miese to tell the village folks that they build a house for worship. Miese wrote several letters begging Fred to come, as several hundred from other villages had accepted the Word of God; but each time, Fred had to report that he was not going to come out until that house of God had been built. Then came a letter saying! "Uncle, please come to Kingombi to baptize, for there

are four hundred who confess conversion and faith in Jesus Christ, and *now* the house of God is built." How our hearts rejoiced in this, our second great awakening in this Mission Field. There had to be preparations for the journey, bedding, tent, food, clothing and medicine must not be forgotten. The evangelists were to come, too, and help in the examining of so many believers. They had twenty miles to walk. One day, they came to a crossroad where a young boy and two very tall men were standing waiting to join them, they had come from a village nearby. They also were headed for the great meetings at Kingombi. The boy gave the military salute which he had seen. Fred stopped and greeted him, saying: "Well, my boy, who are you, and who are these men?" The boy said: "Don't you remember you baptized me? And these two men are my converts, I have taught them about God, and they want you to examine them so that they can be baptized at Kingombi." So they went along, and the day they arrived, about a mile from Kingombi, a group of Christians met them, and two of the men picked up the hammock and told Fred to get in, — it was no use refusing. They ran with him with the greatest speed, and when arriving at the church building, they ran around and around it until they had to let him down. People by the hundreds had gathered, so that it was hard to take time to eat. For three days, the older pastors and preachers helped Fred with examining the four hundred who confessed their faith in Christ. From early morning until late, they worked.

The last day, they agreed to baptize only ninety-eight who had tried to learn and to pray; all the others were encouraged to learn more of the truth, and all who were able to learn to read, must do so. Early on the day of baptism, the ninety-eight were lined up and the whole congregation was asked to make known if they knew of anyone who was not living as a Christian. A man went forward to one in the line and said to the elders: Do not baptize this man, for he bought bananas from me, promising to pay me, but he never did." The unhappy candidate assured the man that he would pay for the bananas, but the rule must be followed, and the elders told him kindly, to step out until the next baptismal.

Down by a stream in the forest one by one these believers were baptized. The beautiful symbol was explained to them, and lovely hymns were sung by the many voices who had been taught by Daniel Miese. Fred in his diary, writing about this day, finishes thus: "We were in no hurry to go away from the stillness of the forest, thinking of the River of Life, full and free. If there is joy in heaven over one lost sheep rescued, what joy must there have been over ninety-seven! Coming back to the church, we had a blessed time at the Communion. At two o'clock the meetings were over. A few minutes later all was still. Hundred yards away, they all disappeared into the bush, going to hundreds of homes to worship the God who loves them and gave his Son to be their Savior. The Kingombi church was formed, October 1903."

CHILDREN'S PAGE

A FABLE

One day the woodchuck, the muskrat and the fishing vulture set out together to seek their fortune. Presently they arrived upon a garden of sugar cane, juicy, luxuriant cane, in a cool valley. The muskrat made up his mind on the spot: "Honorable Woodchuck and Honorable Fishing Vulture, you may go where you will, but as for me I am satisfied to stop and call this my fortune."

The woodchuck and the fishing vulture chose to continue their search for better things, and they left the muskrat to rejoice in his sugar cane garden. He ate and he ate and he ate and he ate. After a complete and satisfying meal, when his belly was sufficiently rounded, he lay down in a hole and fell fast asleep. But the garden had an owner, and that owner chose this unfortunate moment to inspect his plantations. When he saw the depredations of the woodchuck he roared with anger. He looked for the muskrat high and low, and looked and looked and looked. Finally he called his dog and showed him the tracks:

"Get him! get him! get him!" And then the familiar cry of triumph. The gardener's shotgun spoke and the poor muskrat's bubble literally burst!

Meanwhile the woodchuck and the fishing vulture walked on, and on, and on. Tired out walking, the fishing vulture spied a big tall palm loaded with ripe and succulent nuts. Dead ripe, they fairly oozed oil. The vulture made his decision: "Honorable Woodchuck, said he, you may go on if you like, but leave me here. I want these nuts. Good-bye." The vulture ate, nut after nut, nut after nut, till he could eat no more, then settled down to make a home in his new-found Paradise. He squatted among the nuts and fell asleep. But a disappointed hunter came along, and considered, "Perhaps there are nuts in yonder palm. Since I can find no game, palm-nuts would be welcome food." He shook the palm, and the vulture awoke. But alas! he had eaten too much to fly! One shot was enough, the vulture flopped to the ground; and the hunter had meat for his palm-chop.

The woodchuck pursued his quest alone. By and by he came upon a large fallen mahogany tree. "Just the spot for a fine home", he thought. Forthwith he fell to work and hollowed out a hole in the great log. He gnawed and gnawed and gnawed and gnawed. At last, with weary jaw and empty stomach, he contemplated with a woodchuck's satisfaction an adequate, safe and comfortable home in the heart of the hard old mahogany tree.

Next day as he was gathering food, which he found to be plentiful enough, Dame Fortune accosted him with, "Are you the only one who has come?" "Yes, I have come alone." The woodchuck sat up politely. "Three of us started out together, but the others found their fortune in food and easy living."

"I know it, laughed Dame Fortune. Poor foolish Muskrat and poor foolish Fishing Vulture! All they wanted was to fill their stomachs, — and they did. But now they are dead. You alone have triumphed, you alone have found true Fortune. Long may you live in the joy of your new home and may you never go hungry."

LESTER HOOKS

STATION NEWS

TONDO NEWS NOTES

After a holiday of several weeks at Tondo, Miss Winifred Browne left March 24th to return to her work at Yalemba.

Elizabeth Lucy Russell delighted guests at her first birthday party by blowing out the candle on her cake and by taking a few steps.

Upon the closing of the Boys' Boarding School thirteen diplomas were awarded. The recipients will be on holiday until July when at the mid-year conference of pastors and teachers many of them will be designated to special fields of work.

May lst the Browns left Tondo for Bolenge. Mrs. Brown is having dental work done at Coquilhatville, then she and Douglas will rest until Mr. Brown's return from the Reference Committee meeting at Léopoldville.

Dr. Russell and Miss Chaplin report a record number of patients at the hospital these days. Medical recensement work in the district has been started and will be carried on during the coming weeks.

Miss Eldredge has been in the district almost continuously since her return from furlough, and expects to return from her last itinerary for the season about July 15th, after which she will settle down to station and boarding school duties.

LEOPOLDVILLE NEWS NOTES

Since our last Congo News Letter George and Isabel Carpenter have "flown" away from us. They reached the States a week after they left us here, which is a considerable increase in speed over the six to eight weeks trip. We miss them but we wish them a restful happy furlough.

Our Committee, which recently met at Léopoldville-Est,

found great difficulty in solving the staffing problem. Many of our missionaries are on furlough, and those due to return are unable to get back. The depleted staff has been spread thin over the eight stations. At present Moanza is left with only Rev. and Mrs. Brown to care for the large district as well as station work.

We had the joy of having Emily Satterberg's company for a couple of weeks recently. We trust she benefitted from her vacation.

Dr. and Mrs. Osterholm and Katherine-Jean are here at present awaiting Clipper passage home.

A special soldiers' service has been started on Sunday mornings at 9:45 for the men who cannot get away for our early morning Lingala service. We are also continuing the two mid-week services at the camp, and we hope the boys who are far away from their families and the home church will thus be helped and strengthened in their Christian life. Many not only leave home and friends, but also have to learn a new language and live amongst people with different tribal customs.

Dr. and Mrs. Freas have just arrived at Léopoldville en route to Vanga where the will take over the medical work during the furlough of Dr. Osterholm.

LINDA WATKINS

Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. — Heb. 10:35.

It is His will that I shall cast
My care on Him each day.
He also tells me *not* to cast my
Confidence away.
But Oh! How foolishly I act,
When taken unaware;
I cast away my confidence, and
Carry all my care.

CONGO MISSION DIRECTORY

Listed in order of arrival on field or at station — present term.

BANZA MANTEKE

Miss Lena Youngsman
Rev. and Mrs. H. Erickson

MOANZA

Rev. and Mrs. L.A. Brown

TONDO

Rev. and Mrs. H.D. Brown
Dr. and Mrs. A.J.B. Russell (B.M.S.)
Miss M.K.M. Chaplin (B.M.S.)
Miss Marguerite Eldredge

LEOPOLDVILLE

Rev. and Mrs. S. Baiotti (U.T.M.)
Mr. and Mrs. H.J. Watkins

KIKONGO

Rev. and Mrs. C.E. Smith
Miss Agnes Anderson
Miss Grace Cooper
Rev. and Mrs. B.W. Armstrong

VANGA

Rev. and Mrs. W.F. Robbins
Rev. M.S. Engwall
Miss Ruth Dickey
Dr. and Mrs. H.M. Freas

KIMPESE

SONA BATA

Dr. and Mrs. G.W. Tuttle
Rev. Mrs. and P.A. MacDiarmid
Miss Emily Satterberg
Miss Vendla Anderson
Dr. and Mrs. R. Bréchet (PHILAFRICAN MISSION)

ON FURLOUGH OR EN ROUTE

Rev. and Mrs. E.G. Hall
Dr. Dorothea Witt
Mrs. M.S. Engwall
Rev. and Mrs. E. Atkins
Miss Eva Shepard
Miss Alice Jorgenson
Rev. and Mrs. J.E. Geil
Dr. C.L. Mabie
Miss Mary Bonar
Miss Esther Ehnbom
Rev. and Mrs. G.W. Carpenter
Miss Mildred Tice
Rev. and Mrs. U.A. Lanoue
Dr. and Mrs. A.C. Osterholm